

Rawdhatul Uloom Islamic Primary School

184 Whalley Old Rd, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 5NZ

Inspection dates

12–14 March 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's high aspirations are shared by trustees and staff. Together, they are fully committed to the continued improvement of the school and pupils' success.
- The trustees have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They use their knowledge well to hold leaders to account.
- Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum. It harmoniously incorporates the Islamic and secular curriculum, contributing to the good progress that pupils make.
- Leaders of subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not routinely ensure that the subjects they lead are taught equally effectively across the school.
- Improvements to the way reading is taught are not fully embedded. It is too soon to measure the impact of these changes on outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Teachers' good subject knowledge contributes to the good progress that pupils make.
- The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers are beginning to work together to share their knowledge and expertise effectively.
- Children in the Reception Year settle quickly in the safe and nurturing environment that leaders have created. Positive relationships fostered by adults contribute to the good progress children make. They are prepared well for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Respect for each other is positively modelled by adults. This contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils in Year 1 use their phonic knowledge well. They enjoy reading and develop as competent and confident readers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers appreciate the care and guidance their children receive from staff. The majority of parents would recommend the school to others.
- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that the independent schools standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the effectiveness of subject leaders by ensuring that subjects other than English, mathematics and science are taught effectively in all year groups, building on pupils' prior learning.
- Further improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that staff continue to share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues
 - embedding the improvements to the way reading is taught so a higher proportion of pupils reach the standard of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong leadership, drive and determination demonstrated by the headteacher has ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been successfully resolved. The headteacher is reflective in the decisions he makes and considers carefully the impact of his actions. Leaders' accurate self-evaluation and clear development plans identify the priorities for improvement.
- The proprietor and leaders, including the trustees, ensure that all the independent school standards are met. Policies and procedures are personalised to the work of the school. They are effective in promoting the school's aims.
- The leader for mathematics demonstrates good subject knowledge. The training she provides ensures that teachers have the knowledge, skills and understanding they need. Mathematics is taught systematically and consistently in all year groups, building on pupils' prior learning and providing opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge to solve increasingly complex problems. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Leaders' careful evaluation and analysis of information identified changes had to be made to the teaching of reading. The training leaders provided for staff has led to improvement in pupils' vocabulary, comprehension and inference skills and in the quality of their writing. However, it is too soon to measure the impact on pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Leaders place a high priority on continuing to improve the quality of teaching. They have established a culture which promotes improvement and reflection. Leaders are beginning to provide opportunities for staff to share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues, including colleagues in other schools. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- In science, leaders have ensured that the curriculum builds on pupils' prior knowledge with clear progression across the school. For example, in Year 2, pupils use their previous learning to carry out experiments to test out the most appropriate conditions needed for a seed to grow successfully.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, in history, pupils demonstrate an understanding of the role women played in the Second World War and talk confidently about life in Tudor England. However, leaders in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are less effective in driving improvements in the quality of teaching and, therefore, pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. The secular and Islamic curriculums complement each other well. Leaders promote pupils' moral and social responsibilities through fundraising events for national charities and visits to local places of interest.
- Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. Pupils show an improving understanding of British values and how they have an impact on everyday life. Pupils are prepared well to be responsible citizens in modern Britain.

- Parents and carers with whom inspectors spoke and those who shared their views on Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, were very complimentary about the school. They appreciate the information they receive about their children’s progress and how they can help them with their learning at home. The majority of parents would recommend the school to others.

Governance

- Trustees acted swiftly to address the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. They have the knowledge and skills they need to hold leaders to account. Trustees have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement.
- Trustees visit the school regularly to check on the impact of actions taken by leaders. They talk with staff and pupils about their learning. Trustees review diligently the information they receive from leaders. They use their breadth of knowledge to review the impact of action plans. Trustees are proud to be part of the school and its standing in the local community. They share leaders’ high expectations and aspirations for the future.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders carry out the appropriate checks to ensure that all adults in school are suitable to work with children, this includes visitors and volunteers who help in school regularly.
- The procedures in place for the protection of pupils are understood by staff. They have a good understanding of how to identify potential signs of abuse because of the effective training they receive. Leaders work effectively with the local authority. Any concerns are acted upon appropriately and all records relating to safeguarding are maintained thoroughly. The school’s safeguarding policy is published on the school’s website and is available to parents on request.
- Leaders know families well. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that any vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate help and guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have created a respectful and nurturing learning environment. Positive relationships are fostered well, which contribute to pupils’ good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers’ good subject knowledge has improved the teaching of mathematics. Mathematics is taught well across the school. Well-planned activities build effectively on pupils’ prior learning. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop a deep understanding of number systems. They apply their knowledge and skills confidently to solve challenging problems, particularly in Year 6.
- Changes to the way in which reading is taught are having a positive impact on improving pupils’ vocabulary, comprehension and inference skills. Teachers foster a love of reading through carefully selected texts and traditional tales. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said, ‘I like reading, once you can read you can learn about lots of other things.’ However,

it is too soon to measure the impact of these changes on outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.

- Pupils' improved use and acquisition of vocabulary has improved the quality of their writing. Teachers plan activities that stir pupils' imagination and creativity as writers. Pupils write confidently for different audiences and for different purposes. For example, in Year 6, pupils studying Macbeth apply their knowledge effectively in their descriptions of the main characters. Younger pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary with increasing accuracy.
- Phonics is taught systematically, consistently and effectively. Pupils apply their phonic knowledge accurately in their reading. They are becoming confident and competent readers.
- In English, mathematics and science, teachers use assessment information effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. They are beginning to work with other colleagues to check their judgements are correct. Teachers use this assessment information to plan learning activities which meet the needs of most pupils and provide appropriate levels of challenge in most year groups.
- Staff skilfully ask questions to probe pupils' ideas further and encourage pupils to expand on their explanations. Additional adults are deployed well to help pupils who are struggling in lessons to catch up quickly.
- Teachers creatively use the outdoor area during physical education sessions. Pupils enthusiastically demonstrate their skills in a range of sporting activities. Cooperation and team work are encouraged by skilled staff and pupils refine their skills and physical control. They understand how important it is to eat healthily and keep fit.
- The quality of teaching of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not as consistently strong. Where teachers' subject knowledge is good, pupils make good progress. However, in some classes learning activities do not routinely build effectively on pupils' prior learning, which hinders the progress that pupils make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Positive relationships are fostered in school well. There is a warmth and respect between staff and pupils.
- Leaders provide a range of experiences and opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visits to a local farm to ride horses and a trip to Lancaster Castle as part of their work in history. Family events in school are well attended, for example the summer barbeque and sports day.
- Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. They are confident that if bullying did happen, it would be dealt with quickly. Teachers develop pupils' respect, tolerance and understanding effectively, particularly through the Islamic curriculum. This understanding prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Visitors from the local emergency services ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of

situations. Younger pupils understand the importance of 'stranger danger' and how to cross the road safely. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that there is always someone with whom they can talk in school. Pupils feel safe, listened to and cared for well.

- Leaders ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of their responsibilities to those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils demonstrate their moral responsibility by fundraising for both national and local charities, including the local foodbank. Pupils show responsibility for the environment by taking part in litter-picking, demonstrating their active role in the local community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. A high level of respect is promoted consistently by staff. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults. Older pupils set a good example. Younger pupils are confident that they will be looked after if ever they fall over or feel sad. Pupils chat happily with their friends and play amicably together during playtimes.
- There are few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are confident that should any occur, they are dealt with appropriately by adults, and that their parents will be informed through the online communication app. Pupils have a good understanding of how their behaviour has an impact on others.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and well mannered. They conduct themselves well around school. Their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning have a good impact on the progress that they make.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Few pupils are persistently absent from school. Leaders swiftly follow up on any absences. They know pupils and their families well. Consequently, staff offer advice and support for any vulnerable families when necessary.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, leaders reviewed the way they assess pupils' attainment, particularly at the end of key stage 2, in preparation for secondary school. Leaders discussed different options, including with the headteacher of the local secondary school. Leaders made the decision to implement the national standard assessment tests (SATs) at the end of Year 6 in 2017, and in both Year 2 and Year 6 in 2018. Procedures were moderated under direction from the Department for Education. The SATs were also externally moderated.
- In 2018, attainment at key stage 1 was below the national average, particularly in reading and writing. Attainment at key stage 2 was above the national average in mathematics, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and science. Attainment was below the national average in reading.
- Pupils' work is well presented and of good quality. Pupils take pride in their work. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers are beginning to work together to share knowledge and check that their judgements about pupils' learning are correct. Pupils' work demonstrates that the majority have the skills and knowledge expected by the school.

- In mathematics, pupils' work is consistently of good quality. Teachers encourage pupils' resilience, particularly when solving increasingly challenging problems. An increasing proportion of older pupils are working at a higher standard. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in other subjects where appropriate, for example when designing and interpreting tables and charts in science.
- Pupils' progress in reading is improving. Younger pupils apply their phonic knowledge effectively to read new words. Older pupils are beginning to use their improving knowledge of vocabulary, comprehension and inference skills, with increasing confidence and accuracy. For example, pupils' work showed they expand their explanations to answer more complex questions. Skilled support staff provide the help pupils who are struggling with their reading need to catch up with their peers. It is too soon to measure the impact of this on outcomes at the end of each key stage.
- Pupils have the opportunity to write for a range of purposes and in different subjects. Pupils' increasing range of vocabulary is evident in the good-quality written work they produce. Older pupils use increasingly complex vocabulary in their creative writing. Pupils' work clearly demonstrates good progress over time in this subject.
- In science, activities are designed to build on pupils' prior learning. For example, experiments in Year 2 to test out the conditions needed for plants to flourish build effectively on pupils' knowledge learned in Year 1 about what a seed needs to grow.
- Pupils talk confidently about the knowledge they have in some other curriculum subjects. For example, in history, pupils explained eloquently the research they had carried out and what they had learned about different types of punishment in Tudor England. However, teaching in subjects other than English, science and mathematics does not build on pupils' prior knowledge in some subjects in some year groups.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders in the early years have created a calm and welcoming environment. Positive relationships are modelled and fostered well by adults. This contributes to the good progress that children make.
- Most children attend a number of local early years providers before they start in this school. Leaders work well with the main nursery provider to share ideas and expertise. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and understanding they need to help children succeed.
- Leaders and staff engage effectively with parents. During the inspection, parents of children soon to join the school visited the Reception class. Parents said that they like the opportunity to meet with staff and to be able to talk about their children before they start school. Children already in the Reception class made the visitors feel very welcome and greeted them with big and confident smiles.
- Workshops about how reading and mathematics are taught are well attended by parents. This ensures that they have the knowledge and skills they need to help their children at home. Parents appreciate the information they receive about their children's progress through the weekly online staff update.

- Leaders gather assessment information from a range of sources, including parents. As a result, they know the children and their families well. Teachers use assessment information carefully to plan the next steps in children's learning.
- Children settle quickly into well-established routines. They enjoy coming to school. Children play happily together, share well and help each other.
- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge typical of children of a similar age nationally. Leaders work with other colleagues to ensure that their judgements are correct. Children make good progress. They are prepared well for Year 1 because of the good teaching they receive.
- Reading is given a high priority. Teachers foster a love of stories and language through well-planned activities. Children who spoke with the inspector enthusiastically retold the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. They became wide-eyed with excitement as they described the surprise the bears got when they found Goldilocks asleep in Baby Bear's bed.
- Phonics is taught systematically from the start of the Reception Year. Teachers use assessment well during lessons to identify children who are struggling. They quickly give them the individual help they need to catch up.
- Children use their phonic knowledge confidently in their own writing. For example, children playing in the vets role-play area used their writing skills to write down the animals that were to be seen and record the treatment they received.
- Support staff are deployed well. They use questions and conversations skilfully to encourage children to talk about their learning. Any mispronunciations are corrected sensitively.
- Children understand the importance of keeping healthy. They enjoy the healthy snacks and fruit provided each day.
- The limited outdoor area is used well. For example, children who were anxious about using the larger bikes were supported well by staff to be able to use the pedals correctly. Other children offered positive advice and encouragement. They celebrated the achievement of others with claps and cheers when they successfully pedalled the bike around the track.
- Staff are very vigilant at the start and end of the school day. Risk assessments are carried out daily. Staff have all received the appropriate training. All statutory requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 119848 |
| DfE registration number | 889/6003 |
| Inspection number | 10067884 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 130 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Mr Abdul Wali Wasway |
| Chair | Mr Abdul Wali Wasway |
| Headteacher | Hamza Mala |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £1,260 |
| Telephone number | 01254 670017 |
| Website | www.gardenofknowledge.co.uk |
| Email address | info@gardenofknowledge.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 21–23 March 2017a |

Information about this school

- Rawdhatul Uloom is an independent Muslim primary school, which is registered to provide full-time education for girls and boys between the ages of four and 11 years, providing Islamic and national curriculum education up to high standards within an Islamic environment.
- The school is registered for 145 pupils. There are currently 130 pupils on roll.
- Currently no pupils have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and no pupils are supported by an education, health and care plan.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils in the school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice to the school.
- Inspectors made an in-depth tour of the school and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including policies, planning documentation and information about the pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They also looked at the school's single central record and any risk assessments where appropriate.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and behaviour. Inspectors observed and spoke with pupils during lessons and at playtimes. Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders and members of staff. They also met with the proprietor, who is also the chair of the board of trustees, and another member of the board.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to Parent View, Ofsted online questionnaire, including seven free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 10 responses from the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bernard Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

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